**Strategy to sustain/ improve the NBDC partnership for influencing national policy and institutional change in rainwater management in Ethiopia**

**Draft**

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**Background**

The Nile Basin Development Challenge (Nile BDC) is funded by the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF) to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods in the Ethiopian highlands through a Landscape (watershed) approach to rain water management. The Program is led by the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and implemented in collaboration with various national research partners. The Program was commenced in Jan 2010 and will end by Dec 2013. The Nile BDC comprises five interlinked projects:

1. Learning about rainwater management systems. A review of past and ongoing activities, an inventory of actors, and identification of best practices for dissemination and use;
2. Integrating technologies, policies and institutions through the development of integrated rainwater management strategies in three action sites (Fogera, Diga, Jeldu) to slow down land degradation and reduce downstream siltation;
3. Targeting and scaling out of rainwater management systems by ‘matching’ promising technologies with particular (biophysical and socio-institutional) environments;
4. Assessing and anticipating the consequences of innovation in rain water management systems at the basin level; and
5. Coordination & Change, which includes M&E and gender, fostering innovation at basin level, and communication.

As part of project (5), the Nile BDC established a National Platform on land and water management in Ethiopia in April 2011 together with key players from different type of organizations. The participants were representative from politics, government, research, NGO/CBOs, private sectors, donors, etc. The establishment of a National Platform was widely supported, not the least by the Ministry of Agriculture. So far the national platform has met three times. The national platform can become a mechanism to enhance communication between actors and across sectors for improved land and water management in the Nile Basin and beyond.

**Vision and objective of the platform**

The platform intends to create a proactive hub, whereby key players from governmental institutions, NGOs, donors and civil societies develop a collective spirit and action and facilitate a national movement on land, water, and NR management.

The **vision** of the platform is:

*“Ensure a healthy, sustainable, and equitable use and management of natural resources for improved productivity, livelihoods and ecosystem services in Ethiopia”*

The **objectives** of the platform are:

1. Improve sector integration, communication and cross-institutional learning
2. Create optimal conditions for (demand driven) capacity in research, development, academia and policy development
3. To improve access to knowledge and resources
4. Provide an enabling environment for sustainable and equitable value-added production systems and functional market links

A Steering Committee has been put in place to overview the overall agenda and functioning of the platform; the platform is supported by a secretariat, currently held by the NBDC.

To structure the discussions at the national level ‘Thematic Working Groups (TWGs)’ have been established around technological innovation, institutional innovation, policy support, and climate change and resilience. These communities of practice are expected to identify best practices and constraints for scaling up through so-called learning events. In the last year of operation, the Nile BDC would like to capitalize on the lessons learned in the various Nile BDC projects and make use of the National Platform and the thematic working groups for influencing national policy and institutions.

**CGIAR system aligning with national initiatives:**

Research institutions are expected to contribute for the growth and transformation agenda of countries through conducting scientific research. Research results and recommendations which are problem solving types were well utilized if there is a national system of alignment, coordination, and uptake mechanisms. The G8 country leaders in their L’Aquila meeting agreed to support programs that are country owned, and coordinated to bring about economic growth. CAADP is an African wide initiative that prioritizes areas of agricultural investment and shows the financial commitment of a given country. The overall goal of CAADP is to “*Help African countries reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculturally-led development, which eliminates hunger, reduces poverty and food insecurity, and enables expansion of exports.”* It is a growth-oriented agriculture agenda, aimed at increasing agriculture growth rates to six percent per year to create the wealth needed for rural communities and households in Africa to prosper. To achieve this goal, CAADP focuses its efforts around four key pillars of intervention:

* *Pillar 1*: Extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems;
* *Pillar 2*: Improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market access;
* *Pillar 3*: Increasing food supply, reducing hunger, and improving responses to food emergency crises; and
* *Pillar 4*: Improving agriculture research, technology dissemination and adoption.

Ethiopia based on own and experiences of other countries has developed its CAADP compact and identified four indigenized pillars of investment areas including land and water management, research and extension, markets and food security. It also formulated its five years growth and transformation plan- GTP that indicates agriculture to be a major source of economic growth. The same document emphasized the enhancement of the use of country’s water resources to promote multiple cropping and better cope with climate variability and insure food security. Expansion of small scale irrigation will be given priority while due attention will be given to medium and large scale irrigation to the extent possible. Concerted efforts will be made to expand water shade management and to carry out effective water and moisture retaining works. (page 8 of GTP)

The CGIAR research endeavours are also expected to be aligned with this country owned investment frameworks, national development plan and coordination mechanisms. In Ethiopia, the RED/FS, is a good example of donor coordination mechanism existed at national level whereby all donors, NGOs, private sector, universities, and professional associations are represented and contribute for national dialog. There are also technical working groups and taskforces organized under the RED/FS coordination platforms that includes the SLM technical committee, agricultural growth, private sector and food security working groups. Agricultural development partners’ linkage advisory council (ADPLAC) is also one of the coordination and networking mechanism to link research, extension, farmer and industry. Therefore, the CGIAR research system is expected to collaborate and be part of the national coordination mechanism and their research agenda setting should pass through the national research review process and research findings to pass through the ADPLAC process for grassroots level applications. These efforts will ensure sustainability, avoid duplication of efforts and facilitate early uptake of research recommendations for different uses including policy reform. The question here is, are the CGIAR research centres part of the national coordination system including IWMI and ILRI? The answer is mixed- yes or no. As observed few centres are working together with the national research system but the majority of them are not. The NBDC as a research project could take the first step to share the idea and initiate discussion among the CG system on how they can be represented at the national coordination mechanism( can be on rotational bases) to share research results, recommendations, process and tools to influence policy, institution and practices. In all the process, NBDC works will be aligned with all water and land management initiatives at national and regional levels.

**Basin wide coordination mechanism**

In the past years, there was no as such Nile Basin wide coordination of research and development efforts of the different stakeholders. The establishment of Nile basin development Authority is a recent phenomenon. The catchment areas of the basin fall under the three regions- Amhara, Oromiya and Benishangul Gumuz administrative regions.

The Abbay Basin, which has an area of 196,770 square kilometers, accounts for 20% of the country’s land area and harbors 25% of the country’s population. Over 40% of the country’s agricultural production and about 39% of the national cattle herd emanate from there. (Abbay Master Plan, 1998) The Abbay Basin provides the major water supply of the Nile River along with other demographic and ecological assets. Having abundant water resources with many rivers draining into the Abbay River and featuring the biggest freshwater lake in the country, Lake Tana, the Basin has been an important source of biodiversity, food, wildlife, bird life and stunning scenery of diverse ecology ranging from desert like environment to alpine conditions.

However, the Basin’s natural resource including its biodiversity, socio-cultural values and relics have seriously been affected by its century’s long environmental degradation. Though awareness raising efforts about the importance of sustaining upstream environmental integrity have been made, there has hardly been any investment to shore up the Basin’s development. Hence, the Basin’s acute degradation has been there for all to see with dismaying consequences such as acute food shortages, regional warming, wastage in farmable space and losses of wildlife.

Here comes the importance of research and development initiatives to address the critical degradation problems observed in the basin through well-coordinated efforts of the different stakeholders. Land and water management research recommendations, best practices, institutional innovations and planning tools are instrumental for sustainable development of the basin resources. It is due to these reasons that the NBDC together with the Abay Basin Development Authority, BOA, research institutions etc should take the lead to facilitate basin wide platform meeting to share experiences of the different stakeholders working in the basin including findings and recommendation of NBDC.

***Main strategic directions to be followed to influence policy and institutions:***

*Review of past efforts* of NBDC:

In order to find out major strategic directions and work plan for the remaining one year of the project, the national consultant consulted previous works of the NBDC ( Doug Merry and Tadele- review document, Ethiopian Economic association policy review document) and minutes of the national platform meetings. As reviewed, most of the documents indicate the planning process and future plan of the project. As to my understanding, there is no as such project research recommendations/products presented at the national platform meetings for experience sharing and influencing policy and institutions at national and regional levels. So, this year efforts of NBDC should target to finalize started research activities and package research results, recommendations, institutional innovations, improved practices, technological innovations, process and tools of the different projects as “one NBDC” and share with all stakeholders including farmers, planners, politicians, policy makers, researchers etc , through the national platform meetings and other dissemination mechanisms. The strategic direction points and activities of the year presented here, emanates from this reality and background information.

The main strategic directions to be followed to influence policy and an institution in the remaining one year of the project needs to follow a dual approach: the demand and supply side.

1. **Demand side**: The national consultant to take the lead

* Consult policy makers at MOA (state minister level) and MOWE (state minister level-Simon to suggest name) in the presence of Alan and Simon if possible.
* Explore opportunities on how to work together with the national and regional levels platforms already established through MOA and BOA (including SLM) and through (?) MOWE
* Learn how RED/FS platform, the SLM technical committee and ADPLAC are functioning at national and regional level- SWOT—Include the Water and Land resource centre (Dr Gete)
* Explore factors contributing for the sustainability of the above mentioned platforms- institutional leadership, source of funding, etc
* What do policy makers like to see/get from platforms and projects like NBDC?
* To look for political champions:
* Wondowossen of Naile basin development Authority based in Bahir Dar
* H.E Ato Seleshi- state minister – MOA,
* High level person from MOWE? TBD
* Ato Gedu of BOA- Bahir Dar
* Look for the people from Oromiya and Benishangul Gumz
* Institutions to be consulted:
* Federal Institutions- MOA, MOWE, donors (CIDA, WB, IFAD, GIZ, DFID, USAID), SC members of NBDC
* Regional level consultation---Amhara region- BOA, Nail Basin Authority, Benishangul gumuz, Oromiya region
* Presentation of past platform meeting experiences (NBDC facilitated national platform and others) and explore opportunities for future institutional sustainability.

**Expected result**:

* ways and means identified to integrate NBDC issues into the existing national and regional platforms, coordination mechanisms and /or planning process- ADPLAC, ESIF for SLM, National Agricultural Research System review process, multi-stakeholders meetings etc

1. **Supply side**: Simon to take the coordination with format developed

* The promotion of available research products (recommendations, institutional issues, technological innovations, improved practices, process, tools and capacity building) of the NBDC in ministries and their affiliates- do we have them?
* Identify and package research results, tools, process of NBDC for sharing at national and regional level- Alan and Simon to take the lead and coordinate with others. Researchers and project leaders need to identify research results that could be communicated for different levels of audience- national policy makers, basin level policy makers and practitioners.

1. **Mechanisms to share**:
2. Organize the national platform in Feb 2013- Emphasis on NBDC products, lessons learned and recommendations, but also institutional sustainability and financing issues will be tabled for discussion.
3. Organize Basin level platform meeting in July 2013 with strong focus on regional involvement—Place: Bahir Dar where the Basin Authority head office is based. NBDC research results will be presented (key people as identified by NBDC leadership to provide the key issues), and institutional networking modality discussed from sustainability point of view. The results of this workshop will be an input for the Oct-Nov national platform meeting. Who should participate in the meeting and present papers left open for discussion with the NBDC leadership?
4. Organize another national platform in October or November 2013. This may include final presentation of NBDC research products for wider use, but will also have a strong focus on sustainability of the platform beyond 2013. It is also possible to invite other institutions willing to support the platform and share their experiences. This platform meeting could be merged with the African wide experience sharing where the first day could be focused on the Ethiopian case.
5. Share information using formal and informal networking- email list for updating, one on one meeting with key political figures and through policy briefs.
6. Organize small core group meetings (SC members) to discuss on outstanding issues and strategic directions (especially related to sustainability of the national platform)- Composition of the SC will be subject for discussion and modification to include the missing partners- private sector, women, donors, EIAR, professional association, think tank group etc. Redefine the role of the SC and also decide on the frequency of its meetings.
7. Use media as one means of influence- panel discussion, professional associations, think tank groups, interview etc. Feasibility to be discussed with Ewen and/or Peter!!
8. Thematic working groups – community of practice, do they have a role in the future? Could they shift in to learning events? Could they serve as validation mechanisms for research findings/tools?
9. **Key activities:**

* Strategy and work plan to be developed based on feedbacks
* Participate in monthly and key Nile BDC meetings, such as planning and reflection meetings
* Preparation of and participation in national steering committee meetings
* Participate in National and regional Platform meetings to improve the current Nile BDC partnership for influencing national and regional policies in rain water management systems.
* Initiate discussion among CG system for their representation in national platforms and other coordination mechanisms if agreed by the NBDC leadership.
* Identify opportunities for sustaining the National Platform after the Nile BDC project funding has ended (end 2013)

1. **Deliverables/outputs:**

* Initial strategy and work plan (this document)
* Reports of meetings and activities
* Field reports
* Report on how best to link demand and supply- After Feb/March, would be good to see an overview of the demand side; what are the mechanisms etc. how does this work, and what do they expect from us, and how does this relate to our lessons/recommendations/product, what will be the entry point and follow up strategy?
* Quarterly progress reports

**Work plan: January to December 2013**

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| Activities |  | 1st quarter | | | 2nd quarter | | | 3rd quarter | | | 4th quarter | | |
|  | # of days | Jan | Feb | ma | Apr | may | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Consultation at national level | 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Regional level consultations and follow up ( formal and informal) | 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attend monthly meetings of NBDC including preparation, preparatory meetings, exchange of information and follow up of decisions | 12 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attend SC meetings- preparation for SC meeting, attend, follow up | 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attend learning events | 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attend platform meetings & preparatory, follow up | 12 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prepare strategy and wok plan | 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Consultation with CGIAR | 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

NB: It is subject for revision as per demand and prior agreement with Kees, Alan and Simon; progress will be discussed with Kees.

Regional platform meeting date (June or July): To be fixed in consultation with Basin Authority leadership and other regional stakeholders (BOA) and ARARI.